

Fifty Career Paths in a White Nationalist Forum

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Context

This research forms part of my PhD project, investigating collective identity and users' assimilation to and renegotiation of collective identity in a white nationalist forum. This quantitative section examines members' posts per year.

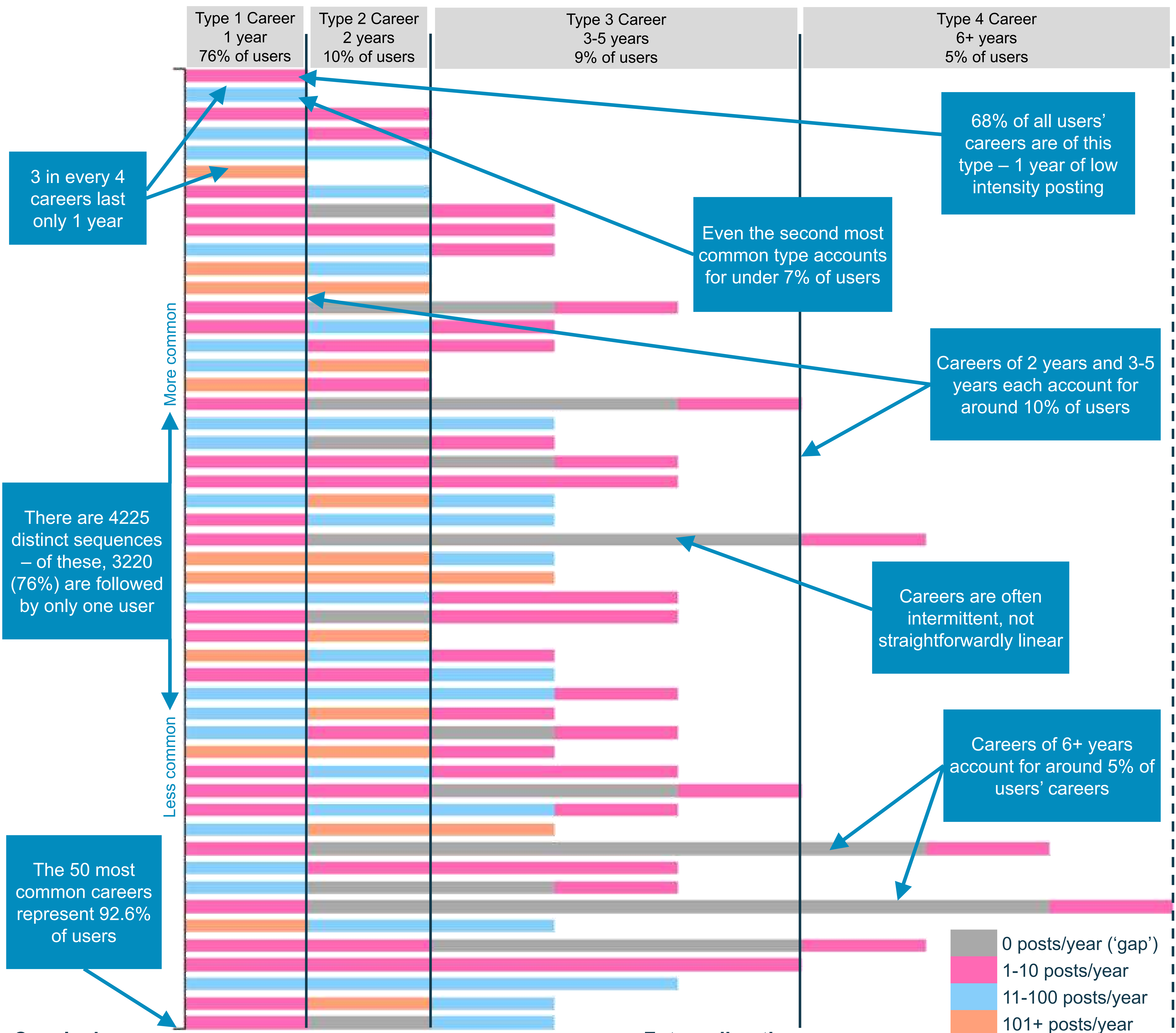
The sociological 'career'

Literature suggests:

- Linear progression through organisations, groups, and identity categories
- Defined by duration and intensity of engagement, and behavioural patterns
- Radicalisation as a career?

Data and method

- Metadata from 122,993 forum users over the years 2001-2018
- Sequence analysis and visualisation carried out using TraMineR
- Sequence states defined by posting intensity



Conclusions

- Actual careers less linear than literature suggests
- Three quarters of individuals' careers only last one year
- Careers are very heterogeneous – 4255 distinct paths
- There are four basic Career Types, based on career length

Future directions

- Corpus work will examine linguistic practices within and between Career Types
- Implications will be drawn on individual and collective identities, and processes of acculturation and radicalisation

